

The Chew Valley

A Gem of the Mendip
Hills National Landscape



Mendip Hills
National
Landscape



Nestled within the Mendip Hills National Landscape, the Chew Valley stands out as a unique and cherished feature. This picturesque valley, with its tranquil lake and lush surroundings, is one of the Mendip Hills' special qualities.

A Changing Landscape

The Chew Valley is underlain by Triassic rocks, specifically Dolomitic Conglomerate, which were deposited by running water during the Triassic Period, around 250-200 million years ago

This geological foundation contributes to the valley's distinctive red rock formations, containing angular fragments of local pebbles. The valley's history is further enriched by the creation of Chew Valley Lake in 1956, which flooded farmland and villages to form a reservoir. This transformation has made the valley a vital source of drinking water and an internationally important habitat for birds.



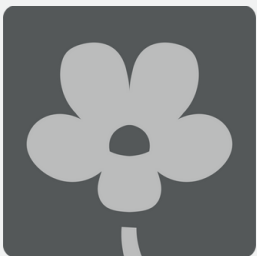
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Photo by Lucy Masters

A haven for people and wildlife

Chew Valley Lake is not only a crucial water supply but also a haven for wildlife. Designated as a European Special Protection Area, the lake supports a diverse range of bird species, making it a prime location for birdwatching

The surrounding landscape, with its smaller fields divided by hedges and hedgerow trees, contrasts beautifully with the windswept plateau of the Mendip Hills. This sheltered, lower-lying farmed landscape offers a peaceful retreat for visitors, providing opportunities for fishing, walking, and enjoying the natural beauty. Chew Valley lake cafe and picnic area is one of the most popular visitor destinations in the area.



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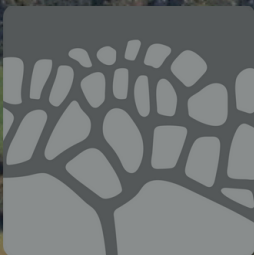
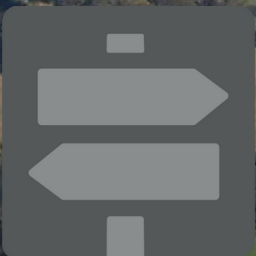
Photo by Jonathan Ridley

Cultural and Community Significance

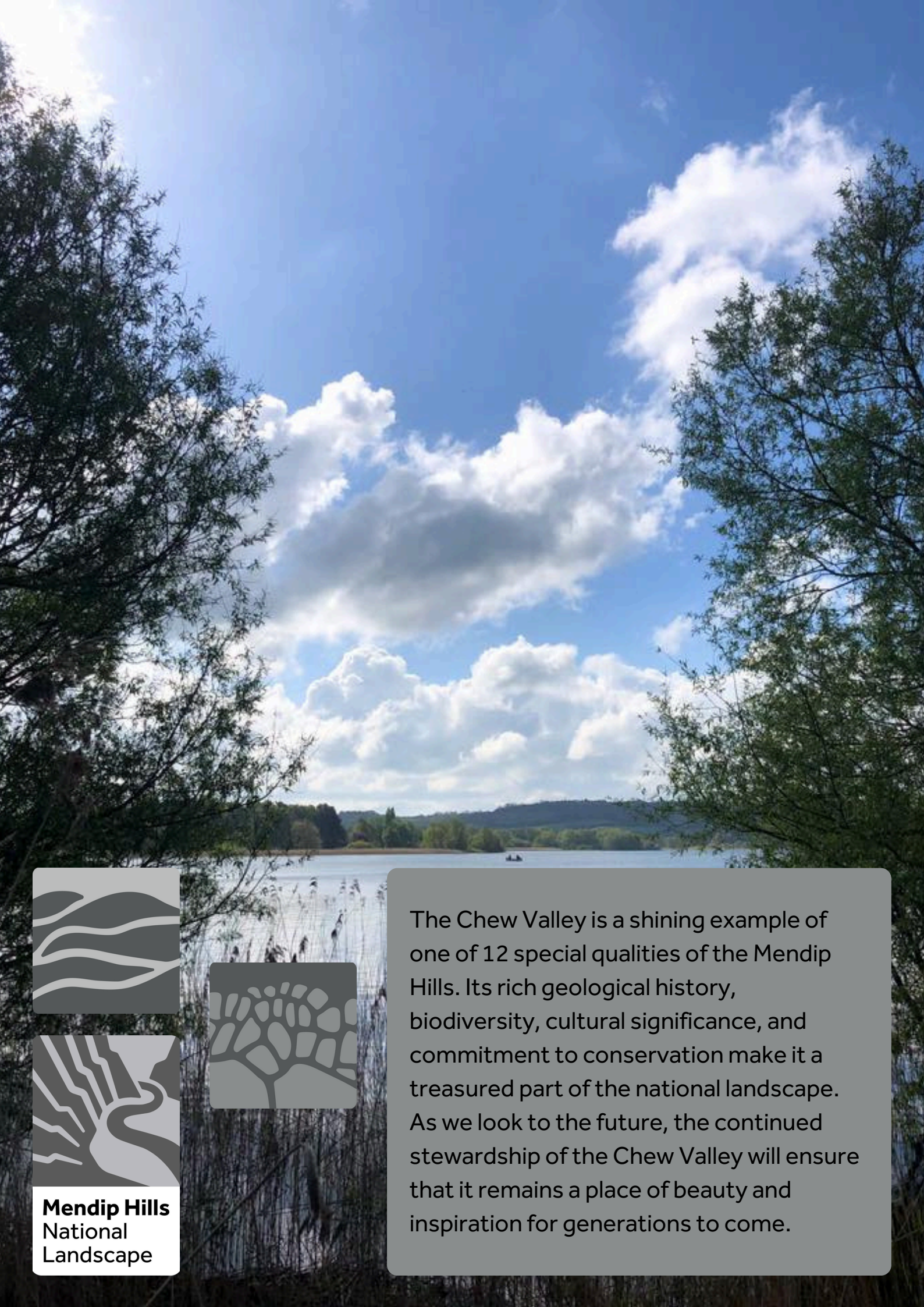
The Chew Valley is more than just a natural wonder; it is a place of cultural and community importance. The valley's creation and ongoing management reflect the efforts to balance human needs with environmental conservation. Local communities have adapted to the changes brought by the lake, integrating it into their daily lives and activities. The valley's scenic beauty and recreational opportunities attract visitors from near and far, fostering a sense of connection and appreciation for the Mendip Hills.

Conservation and Future Prospects

The Mendip Hills National Landscape Management Plan emphasizes the importance of preserving the Chew Valley's unique qualities. Efforts are ongoing to maintain the ecological health of the lake and its surroundings, ensuring that it continues to serve as a vital habitat for wildlife and a source of enjoyment for people. The plan also highlights the need for sustainable practices that protect the valley's natural resources while supporting the local economy. This will mean working with farmers and other partners to ensure the water is as clean as possible before it gets to the lake.



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The Chew Valley is a shining example of one of 12 special qualities of the Mendip Hills. Its rich geological history, biodiversity, cultural significance, and commitment to conservation make it a treasured part of the national landscape. As we look to the future, the continued stewardship of the Chew Valley will ensure that it remains a place of beauty and inspiration for generations to come.